

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 2920

LIMDIS

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SUBJECT: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS - THIRD PLENARY OF SECOND ROUND

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EMBASSY ROME FOR BERGOLD

SUMMARY: US SIDE MADE CLEAR THAT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS
REMAINED TIED TO PROGRESS IN NATO DISCUSSINS AND THAT THE
GREEK DRAFT AGREEMENT POSED A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS FOR US AND
FOR NATO ALLIANCE. US SIDE FIRMLY LINKED ANY DECISION ON
HOMEPORTING TO GREEK ACCEPTANCE OF CONTINUATION OF US PRESENCE
AT HELLENIKON, AND DECLINED TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE FURTHER
UNTIL ACHIEVED. A SUBGROUP ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS WAS FORMED,

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AND THE GREEK DESIRE TO BENEFIT FROM US TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

ENUNCIATED. PROGRESS ON SOFA ISSUES WAS NOTED AND FURTHER MEETINGS SCHEDULED. CONTINUATION OF THE SECOND ROUND FOR ANOTHER WEEK APPEARED INEVITABLE. END SUMMARY

1. THE THIRD PLENARY SESSION MET AT 1000 HOURS APRIL 15. AMB CALOGERAS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE SUBGROUPS, IN WHICH EXCHANGES OF VIEWS ON IMPORTANT POINTS HAD CLARIFIED MANY ISSUES, HOPEFULLY TO THE SATISFACTION OF BOTH SIDES AND EXPRESSED HIS HOPE THAT SUCH SUBGROUP WORK COULD CONTINUE. HE FELT THAT IN THE SOFA SUBGROUP THE PROBLEM OF WAIVERS HAD BEEN MET BY THE US SIDE WITH UNDERSTANDING AND THAT IN THE HELLENIKON SUBGROUP THE US REPRESENTATIVES HAD PROVIDED MUCH VALUABLE INFORMATION WHICH HAD BEEN NOTED WITH GREAT INTEREST AND DISCUSSED BY THE GREEK SIDE, AND HE FELT THIS SUBGROUP COULD ALSO CONTINUE ITS WORK. HE WISHED THE US SIDE IN THIS SUBGROUP TO IDENTIFY THE ACTIVITIES WHICH THE US REGARDED AS VITAL AND THE PERSONNEL LEVEL THE US VIEWED AS VITAL AND IRREDUCIBLE IN PERFORMING THESE FUNCTIONS. HE ALSO REQUESTED DETAILS OF POSSIBLE CONSOLIDATION OF ACTIVITIES, OF BUILDINGS, AND OF PERSONNEL ON THIS BASE. FURTHER, HE WISHED TO KNOW WHAT THE GREEK ARMED FORCES AND GOVERNMENT COULD DO TO ASSIST IN THE WORK OF THESE VITAL US FUNCTIONS, SINCE THE GREEK SIDE INTENDED TO FACILITATE US ACTIVITIES ON GREEK SOIL UNDER A NEW AND DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT, AND WISHED TO HAVE EMERGE FROM THE DISCUSSIONS CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN US AND GREEK TECHNICAL SERVICES, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS, WHERE GREATER COOPERATION SHOULD BE POSSIBLE BETWEEN GREEK AIR FORCE AND NAVY AND US FORCES. CALOGERAS SUGGESTED A NEW SUBGROUP ON THE IRAKLION AS AND NAVCOMMSTA, NEA MAKRI TO DETERMINE HOW COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE TWO FORCES COULD BE MORE FRUITFUL AND THE GREEK ARMED FORCES COULD BENEFIT FROM THE TECHNICAL SKILLS ALREADY EXISTING IN US INSTALLATIONS ON GREEK SOIL.

2. STEARNS RESPONDED BY CHARACTERIZING THE GREEK DRAFT AGREEMENT (REF D) AS A GREEK PRESENTATION OFFERED AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE, A FORMAT FOR AN UMBRELLA AGREEMENT WHICH MIGHT EMERGE FROM THESE TALKS. NOTING THAT CALOGERAS EARLIER HAD OUTLINED THE FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPAL

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CATEGORIES TO BE COVERED IN SUCH AN AGREEMENT, STEARNS EXPLAINED THAT THE US STILL MAINTAINED AN OPEN MIND ON THE STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF WHATEVER EMERGED FROM THESE TALKS, ALTHOUGH THE US SAW THE USEFULNESS OF UPDATING AND SYNTHESIZING THE CURRENT TANGLE OF AGREEMENTS. HOWEVER, THE FORMAT OF ANY POSSIBLE AGREEMENT COULD NOT BE DECIDED UNTIL THE QUESTIONS OF SUBSTANCE WERE SETTLED. THERE WERE PROBLEMS ON THE US SIDE INHERENT IN THE DRAFTING OF A NEW

AGREEMENT, NOTABLY INCLUDING THE POSSIBLE NEED FOR CONGRESSIONAL RATIFICATION. THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THESE TALKS WAS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS CONCERNING US FACILITIES ON GREEK SOIL, AND IT WAS NOT NECESSARY YET TO REACH A DECISION ON THE ULTIMATE FORM THE FINAL AGREEMENT WOULD TAKE.

3. COMMENTING ON CERTAIN IMPLICATIONS OF THE GREEK DRAFT, STEARNS POINTED OUT THAT THE PREAMBLE APPEARED TO PREJUDGE THE QUESTION OF GREECE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NATO, WHICH COULD ONLY BE DECIDED IN MULTILATERAL TALKS IN NATO. THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY, TO WHICH GREECE CONTINUED TO ADHERE, INVOLVED NOT ONLY THE ADVANTAGES GREECE RECEIVED FROM ITS ADHERENCE, BUT INCLUDED OBLIGATIONS ON GREECE'S PART AS WELL. BY MENTIONING ONLY ARTICLES 3 AND 5 IN THE PREAMBLE, AND BY REFERRING AS A FACT ACCOMPLISHED TO GREECE'S WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO, GREECE WOULD BE ASKING THE US TO RATIFY BILATERALLY A DECISION WHICH GREECE HAD TO DISCUSS MULTILATERALLY WITH ALL ITS NATO PARTNERS. IT WAS THE HOPE AND POLICY OF THE US THAT GREECE WOULD RETURN TO FULL PARTICIPATION IN NATO. THE US RECOGNIZED THAT GREECE AS A SOVEREIGN NATION COULD MAKE ITS OWN CHOICE, BUT THIS HAD TO BE DONE IN CONSULTATION WITH ALL NATO PARTNERS. STEARNS OBSERVED THAT TOPICS CURRENTLY UNDER DISCUSSION WERE OF INTEREST TO NATO AS A WHOLE, SINCE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS HAD WIDER IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE, BUT IT WAS NECESSARY TO BE CAREFUL WHEN DISCUSSING INDIVIDUAL FACILITIES NOT TO DECIDE BILATERALLY THOSE SUBJECTS REQUIRING MULTILATERAL DECISIONS, PARTICULARLY WHERE NATO INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS HAD BEEN USED, WHERE JOINT USE OF FACILITIES HAD BEEN AGREED, AND WHERE NUCLEAR WEAPONS WERE INVOLVED. AS ALL OF THESE MATTERS WERE INTERRELATED, THE US SIDE RESERVED ITS COMMENTS CONCERNING ANY POSSIBLE FINAL UMBRELLA AGREEMENT. STEARNS
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URGED THE GREEK SIDE TO MOVE AHEAD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN THEIR NATO DISCUSSIONS SO THE GREEK NATO ROLE COULD BE DEFINED OR REDEFINED, THEREBY FACILITATING THE CONCLUSION OF APPROPRIATE BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN GREECE AND THE US. CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE DISCUSSIONS COULD PROCEED NOW ON A BILATERAL BASIS, OTHERS CONCURRENTLY WITH NATO DISCUSSIONS, AND ON OTHERS NO PROGRESS COULD BE MADE UNTIL GREECE'S ROLE IN NATO WAS DEFINED. THIS DID NOT IMPLY THAT THE US INTENDED TO DEFER IMPORTANT DECISIONS WHERE BILATERAL DECISIONS COULD BE MADE. IT HAD TO BE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE FINAL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WOULD OF COURSE DEPEND UPON THE OUTCOME OF DISCUSSIONS IN THE MULTILATERAL FORUM DEFINING GREECE'S FINAL POSITION IN NATO.

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4. STEARNS AGREED THAT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE SUBGROUPS AND INDICATED THAT THE SOFA SUB-GROUP SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONTINUE AT AN AGREED PACE. HE FELT THE LOSS OF MR ECONOMIDES FROM THE GREEK DELEGATION (WHO IS SCHEDULED TO DEPART FOR LOS CONFERENCE APRIL 19) MIGHT INFLUENCE THE ABILITY OF THAT GROUP TO COMPLETE ITS WORK QUICKLY, BUT BELIEVED THE TWO SIDES SHOULD END UP WITH A CLEAR IMPRESSION OF WHAT CHANGES WOULD BE REQUIRED. THE SUB-GROUP ON HELLENIKON HAD HAD A SUCCESSFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. STEARNS NOTED THAT THE GREEK SIDE HAD ASKED THE US TO DEFINE WHAT WAS ESSENTIAL AT THAT BASE, BUT IN PLENARY THE US WAS STILL FACED WITH THE GREEK POSITION THAT NOTHING WAS ESSENTIAL, THAT NOTHING THERE CONTRIBUTED TO GREEK DEFENSE NEEDS. THE US HAD CONVINCINGLY SHOWN THAT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE, THAT US SERVICES AT HELLENIKON DID CONTRIBUTE TO
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GREEK DEFENSE. IF THE GREEK SIDE AGREED THAT THE US PRESENCE AT HELLENIKON COULD CONTINUE, ALTHOUGH AT A REDUCED AND LESS CONSPICUOUS LEVEL, THEN THE US SIDE COULD BEGIN TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS OF WHAT WAS ESSENTIAL. WITH SUCH A STATEMENT FROM THE GREEK SIDE, THE US WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS CHANGES THAT COULD BE MADE, SOME OF WHICH COULD BE SUBSTANTIAL.

5. STEARNS SAID THAT HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS HOMEPORTING, THE OTHER MAIN ISSUE, AT THE NEXT PLENARY. HIS PREVIOUS REMARKS CONCERNING HOMEPORTING HAD REFERRED MOSTLY TO THE PROBLEM OF TIMING AND OF THE DANGER OF CLOSING THIS ACTIVITY PREMATURELY, THEREBY GIVING THE WRONG SIGNAL TO COMMON ADVERSARIES. IF THE GREEKS COULD AGREE THAT THE US MIGHT MAINTAIN ESSENTIAL FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON, THEN THE TERMINATION OF HOMEPORTING WOULD BE LESS OF A SIGNAL TO COMMON ADVERSARIES. ADDITIONALLY, CHANGES IN HOMEPORTING WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON SUPPORT ACTIVITIES AT HELLENIKON. HELLENIKON AND HOMEPORTING CONCEPTUALLY AND FROM A PRACTICAL POINT OF VIEW WERE TIED TOGETHER. STEARNS BELIEVED THAT IN THE NEXT PLENARY PROGRESS MIGHT BE MADE ON THESE TWO ISSUES IF THE GREEKS COULD MAKE A COMMITMENT ON HELLENIKON, WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE US SIDE TO GET A DECISION ON HOMEPORTING.

6. STEARNS AGREED TO THE FORMATION OF A SUBGROUP ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND PROPOSED THE NAMES OF THE US DELEGATION, WHEREUPON CALOGERAS PROPOSED THE NAMES OF THE GREEK PARTICIPANTS. CALOGERAS THEN SUGGESTED A TIME SCHEDULE FOR MEETINGS OF ALL THREE SUBGROUPS, TO WHICH STEARNS REPLIED THAT THE HELLENIKON SUBGROUP MEETING SHOULD BE DELAYED UNTIL AFTER THE NEXT PLENARY, SINCE THERE WAS LITTLE MORE THE US SIDE COULD DO UNTIL THE GREEK SIDE HAD DETERMINED WHETHER A CONTINUED US PRESENCE AT HELLENIKON WAS IMPORTANT TO GREECE'S DEFENSE. CALOGERAS STATED THAT HE HAD TO CONSULT MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT BEFORE HE COULD MAKE SUCH A COMMITMENT, BUT ADDED HIS ASSURANCE THAT IF THE GREEKS KNEW IN MORE PRECISE TERMS WHAT THE US VIEWED AS VITAL FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON, A DECISION COULD MORE READILY BE MADE. CALOGERAS REITERATED HIS PREFERENCE THAT THE HELLENIKON GROUP MEET BEFORE THE NEXT PLENARY, TO WHICH STEARNS REPLIED THAT CHANGES BEING DISCUSSED AT HELLENIKON WERE THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF THE US OPERATION. LARGE SUMS OF MONEY WOULD BE NEEDED TO
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MAKE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AND MONEY WAS VERY SCARCE. WHATEVER WAS CUT AT HELLENIKON RAISED THE PRACTICAL PROBLEM OF THE FUTURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP AND HOW IT WOULD BE READ BY OUTSIDERS.

CALOGERAS REMINDED THE US SIDE THAT SUBGROUP DISCUSSIONS WERE NOT BINDING, TO WHICH STEARNS REPLIED THAT THE US DELEGATION HAD ITS OWN BINDING INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW FAR IT COULD GO WITHOUT A GREEK STATEMENT ACCEPTING A CONTINUED US PRESENCE AT HELLENIKON. STEARNS AGAIN STATED HIS PREFERENCE THAT THE SUBGROUP ON HELLENIKON BE DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER THE NEXT PLENARY, AT WHICH TIME HE WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK FURTHER ABOUT HOMEPORING AND THE GREEK SIDE WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK FURTHER ON HELLENIKON. IF THERE IS A BREAKTHROUGH THEN THERE IS ENOUGH INFORMATION ON THE US SIDE TO BE MORE PRECISE IN FURTHER SUBGROUP MEETINGS. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE SOFA SUBGROUP WOULD MEET AT 1000 ON 16 APRIL, THE SUBGROUP ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS AT 1000 ON 17 APRIL, AND THE NEXT PLENARY AT 1000 ON 18 APRIL. BEFORE ADJOURNING, CALOGERAS RETURNED TO THE DRAFT UMBRELLA AGREEMENT, STATING THAT THE GREEK TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE DISCUSSIONS, AS HE HAD NOTED IN HIS OPENING REMARKS IN THE INITIAL ROUND, WERE BASED ON GREEK WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MILITARY ASPECTS OF NATO AND THE PRIME MINISTERS EXPRESSION CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF US MILITARY FACILITIES IN GREECE. FROM THE BEGINNING, THE GREEK SIDE HAD IN MIND REPLACING EXISTING AGREEMENTS WITH AN UMBRELLA AGREEMENT TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE GREEK PARLIAMENT. IT WAS FORTHAT REASON THAT THOSE MATTERS WERE ADDRESSED IN THE PREAMBLE WHEN THE DRAFT WAS PREPARED, AND REFERENCE WAS MADE TO ARTICLES 3 AND 5 TO SHOW GREECE'S DESIRE TO REMAIN IN THE ALLIANCE. CALOGERAS AGREED THAT THE RESULTS OF DISCUSSIONS TO BE HELD IN BRUSSELS COULD NOT BE PREJUDGED BILATERALLY. THEREFORE, HE FELT THERE SHOULD BE NO CONCERN THAT DISCUSSION OF SUCH AN UMBRELLA AGREEMENT WAS AN EFFORT ON THE GREEK SIDE TO DISCUSS WITH THE US MATTERS THAT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED IN BRUSSELS. HE AGREED THAT MANY OF THE ITEMS UNDER DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE US AND GREECE WERE INTER-RELATED WITH NATO MATTERS, AND THE GREEK SIDE AGREED THAT GREECES NEW ROLE IN THA ALLIANCE HAD TO BE DEFINED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WITH THIS IN MIND, CALOGERAS EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE US WOULD SEE FIT TO START AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS ON THE DRAFT THE GREEKS SUBMITTED THE PREVIOUS DAY WITHOUT PREJUDICING WHAT WOULD OCCUR IN BRUSSELS. STEARNS AGREED
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THAT SOME ASPECTS OF THE GREEK DRAFT COULD BE DISCUSSED WHILE OTHER ASPECTS WERE MORE RELATED TO NATO AND WOULD DEPEND ON THE NATO DISCUSSIONS. IN ANY EVENT, STEARNS HAD TRANSMITTED THE GREEK TEXT TO WASHINGTON.
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